Action against companies engaged in contract farming

†1119. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that contract farming is banned in the country;

(b) whether Government are aware that various companies are involved in the work relating to contract farming in different parts of the country for last many years;

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to identify the culprit companies and to take action against them; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Contract farming arrangements of different types have existed in the various parts of the country for centuries for both subsistence and commercial crops. The commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, tea, coffee etc. have always involved some forms of contract farming. Even In the case of the some fruit crops and fisheries, contract farming arrangements, involving mainly the forward trading of commodities have been observed. Contract farming is becoming an increasingly important aspect of agribusiness, whether products are purchased by multinationals or by smaller companies. There are few success stories on contract farming such as Pepsico India in respect of potato, tomato, groundnut and chilli in Punjab, Safflower in Madhya Pradesh, oil palm in Andhra Pradesh, seed production contracts for hybrids seed companies etc. which helped the growers in realization of better returns for their produce. Other success stories of contract farming are milk procurement by Amul and NDDB.

(c) and (d) Since there is no ban on contract farming in the country, the question of taking action against contract farming companies does not arise.

Pesticides residue in food commodities

1120. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the seminar held on 'Pesticide Residue in Food Commodities' organized recently;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken note of the observations made in the seminar; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to ensure that pesticides free food commodities are available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government is already advocating need based and judicious use of pesticides through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programme to ensure that pesticide residues remaining in the crop are either nil within the safe limit. For this purpose, about 600 Farmer Field Schools are organized by 26 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres at different parts of the country in a year. Emphasis is also given for adoption of good agricultural practices by farmers. Government is also promoting the use of natural pesticides, biological control, organic farming and use of safer pesticides. Under the Insecticides Act, 1968, registration of bio-pesticides is encouraged. To develop protocols for safe use of pesticides by recommending good agricultural practices based on multilocational 'supervised field trails'and to monitor pesticides residues in agricultural produce, Ministry of Agriculture through ICAR is already implementing an All India Coordinated Research Project on Pesticides Residues. The research findings on good agricultural practices and the simple methods of decontamination of pesticide residues are promoted through extension machinery.

Pest attack on Bt. cotton

1121. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the pink boll worm is emerging as a major pest in the cotton belt specially in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat;

(b) whether it is a fact that toxin in Bt. cotton is proving to be ineffective against it; and